Toh-Tum / Odd Hands Out

Site of Documentation
Tai Yuan in Oui Sorn Larn Group, Mae Wang district, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand

Description

Toh-Tum is an elimination game that is used by Tai Yuan children from the Chiang Mai Province of Thailand to select a player to start an actual game. For example, if children want to play a game of ‘Marbles’ they would play Toh-Tum to pick which of them would shoot first.

Who Plays?

Toh-Tum requires at least 3 children to play, but groups can be up to 15 participants in size. Played by both and girls, the maximum number of players and their ages will depend on what the next game to be played is. Each game can have as many players as is needed and they can be of any age group.
Time and Place

Each round of Toh-Tum takes as little as a minute to play and can be played anywhere, at anytime.

Skill, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Toh-Tum is a simple game and for the most part only requires listening and hand movement skills. Players that can remember all the words of the rhyme and have a sense of rhythm will find it most enjoyable.

Popularity

Toh-Tum is one of the most popular games that Tai Yuan children play to select a game starter. Children are usually taught this game by their peers or older siblings at school.

History of the game

This game has been played for many years, but is not as old as Toh Pong (called Toh-Chub nowadays) or O-Wa Pae (which was Lala’s original name).

How is the Game Played?

Step 1. All of the players must sit in a circle and hold their hands out, closed in a fist in front of them.
Step 2. Next, a player is selected to be the game’s leader. The game leader will chant the words,* “Tum Lek Tum Yai Tum Noi Oak Pai” and as they chant they will hit each player’s fist with their own first. One hit as they say each word.

*The rhyme means “Small Jars, Big Jars, Small Jars Go Away!”

An alternate rhyme they can choose to chant is,* “Tum Lek Tum Yai Tum Noi Ook Pai Tum Yai Khao Ma, Sib, Yi-sib, Sam-sib, Si-sib, Ha-sib, Hok-sib, Jed-sib, Pead-sib, Nueng-roi”. This rhyme is used less often by players as it is longer, but works just as well.

*This rhyme means “Small Jars, Big Jars, Small Jars Go Away, Big Jars Stay Here, Ten, Twenty, Thirty, Forty, Fifty, Sixty, Seventy, Eighty, Ninety, One Hundred!”

Step 3. The player’s fist that is hit by the leader, at the end of the chant is eliminated from the circle. The game is repeated in the same way, eliminating one player each round. The last player left in the circle starts the next game!

Rules

1. The player whose fist is hit on the last word of the chant has to take their hand out of the circle.

2. The last player left in the circle starts the actual game.